

**Report to:** Communities Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 16 July 2012

**Report Author:** Scrutiny Coordinator

**Title:** Scrutiny Work Programme

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**1. What is the report about?**

The report presents the Communities Scrutiny Committee with its draft forward work programme for members' consideration.

**2. What is the reason for making this report?**

To seek the Committee to review and agree on its programme of future work, and to update members on relevant issues.

**3. What are the recommendations?**

That the Committee:

- 3.1 considers the information provided and approves, revises or amends its forward work programme as it deems appropriate; and
- 3.2 nominates a representative to fill the Committee's vacancy on the Business Planning and Performance Service Challenge Group.

**4. Report details.**

- 4.1 Article 6 of the Council's Constitution sets out each Scrutiny Committee's terms of reference, functions and membership, whilst the rules of procedure for scrutiny committees are laid out in Part 4 of the Constitution.
- 4.2 Denbighshire County Council's Constitution requires scrutiny committees to prepare and keep under review a programme for their future work. By reviewing and prioritising issues, members are able to ensure that the work programme delivers a member-led agenda.
- 4.3 For a number of years it has been an adopted practice in Denbighshire for scrutiny committees to limit the number of reports considered at any one meeting to a maximum of four plus the Committee's own work programme report. The objective of this approach is to facilitate detailed and effective debate on each topic.
- 4.4 The Committee is requested to consider its draft work programme for future meetings as detailed in appendix 1 and approve, revise or amend it as it deems appropriate. This draft work programme reflects the topics and issues suggested by members at the Committee's first

meeting.

When deciding on the work programme members are asked to take into consideration:

- issues raised by members of the Committee
- matters referred to it by the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group
- relevance to the Committee's/Council's/community priorities
- the Council's Corporate Plan and the Director of Social Services' Annual Report
- meeting workload
- timeliness
- outcomes
- key issues and information to be included in reports
- officers and/or lead Cabinet members who should be invited (having regard to whether their attendance is necessary or would add value)
- questions to be put to officers/lead Cabinet members

4.5 In addition, when considering items for inclusion on the future forward work programme members may also find it helpful to have regard to the following questions when determining a subject's suitability for inclusion:

- what is the issue?
- who are the stakeholders?
- what is being looked at elsewhere
- what does scrutiny need to know? and
- who may be able to assist?

4.6 As mentioned in paragraph 4.2 the Constitution of Denbighshire County Council requires scrutiny committees to prepare and keep under review a programme for their future work. To assist the process of prioritising reports, if officers are of the view that a subject merits time for discussion on the Committee's business agenda they have to formally request the Committee to consider receiving a report on that topic. This is done via the submission of a 'proposal form' which clarifies the purpose, importance and potential outcomes of suggested topics. No proposal forms have been received for consideration by the Committee at the current meeting.

4.7 Cabinet Forward Work Programme

When deciding on their programme of future work it is useful for scrutiny committees to have regard to Cabinet's scheduled programme of future work. For this purpose a copy of the Cabinet's forward work programme is attached at Appendix 2.

#### 4.8 Progress on Committee Resolutions

A table summarising recent Committee resolutions and advising members on progress with their implementation is attached at Appendix 3 to this report.

### **5. Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group**

5.1 Under the Council's scrutiny arrangements the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) performs the role of a coordinating committee.

5.2 At its first meeting on 5 July 2012 the Group considered the work programmes of the three scrutiny committees in conjunction with those of Cabinet and the Corporate Governance Committee. It also considered a couple of requests from officers for scrutiny to consider reports on certain topics. One of these requests related to the establishment of service standards for consultation and community engagement with respect to the planning process. Having considered this request the SCVCG concluded that this item did merit scrutiny and therefore recommended that Communities Scrutiny Committee consider the proposals at its October meeting.

5.3 The item has provisionally been scheduled into the Committee's work programme as item 7 for its meeting on 25 October. Members are asked to discuss this request and the potential pressure on the October meeting's business agenda.

### **6. Appointment of Committee Representatives on Council Groups and Boards**

6.1 Periodically the Committee may be asked to appoint representatives from amongst its membership to serve on various Council Boards and Groups.

6.2 Members will recall that, at the Committee's first meeting, they nominated a number of representatives to serve on the Council's Service Performance Challenge Groups as well as a representative to serve on the Council's Strategic Investment Group (SIG) and the Conwy and Denbighshire Collaboration Programme Board.

6.3 In line with the Committee's request members who were not able to attend the last meeting were contacted with a view to establishing whether they would like to serve on any of the vacant Service Performance Challenge Groups. This exercise proved successful. Consequently, only one vacancy now exists for a Committee representative on the Service Performance Challenge Groups, which is for a representative to serve on the Business Planning and Performance Service Challenge Group. The Committee is requested to fill this vacancy. A copy of the latest list of scrutiny representatives

on the Service Performance Challenge Groups can be seen at Appendix 4.

**7. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

Effective scrutiny will assist the Council to deliver its corporate priorities in line with community needs and residents' wishes. Continual development and review of a coordinated work programme will assist the Council in monitoring and reviewing policy issues.

**8. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

Services may need to allocate officer time to assist the Committee with the activities identified in the forward work programme, and with any actions that may result following consideration of those items.

**9. What consultations have been carried out?**

None required for this report. However, the report itself and the consideration of the forward work programme represent a consultation process with the Committee with respect to its programme of future work.

**10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

No risks have been identified with respect to the consideration of the Committee's forward work programme. However, by regularly reviewing its forward work programme the Committee can ensure that areas of risk are considered and examined as and when they are identified, and recommendations are made with a view to addressing those risks.

**11. Power to make the decision**

Article 6.3.7 of the Council's Constitution stipulates that the Council's scrutiny committees must prepare and keep under review a programme for their future work.

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